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Jargon grows and communication is retarded when a learned vocabulary becomes more important for its social than its communicative functions. Teachers often severely correct the culturally deprived speaker of nonstandard English, whereas their first concern should be what is communicated, not how it is communicated. We are, after all, teaching communication, and must suppress our obsession with grammar before it destroys the open atmosphere which encourages the ability to learn any dialect, including the standard dialect. We should work to nurture in students a sensitivity to the "metamessages" in communications--the subtleties of tone and implication growing out of connotative meaning, figurative language, intonation, and emphasis. Thus, we impart to them a better control and awareness of their language, enabling them to write and speak in a manner which mirrors, in its cadences and other devices of sound, the "movement" of ideas, the shape of an argument, and the activity of the mind. (DL)

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Language in Thought and Action

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(Address delivered at the FCTE Fall Conference 1966)

Someone passed a question up to me a few moments ago: what relationship is there between me and Sessue Hayakawa, who appeared in "The Bridge on the River Kwai" some years back? Many of you are too young to know that Sessue Hayakawa was a star in silent movies and that he was knocked out of the industry when talkies came in. I started out my life in grade school in silent movie days by being asked if I were related to Sessue Hayakawa, and I am still being asked the same question.

I got a fan letter not long ago from a man saying how much he had enjoyed my performance in "The Bridge on the River Kwai." He said that he had seen this movie eleven times. Then went on to say, "I am sorry to hear that you aren't doing so well in your academic life. After all," he said in consolation, "you can't do everything!" Just about two weeks ago, "The Bridge on the River Kwai" was shown on national television. My students, who see me every day, congratulated me on how well I had done. I said, "Damn it! Sessue Hayakawa is somewhere between fifteen and twenty years older than I am. Do I look like him?" They said, "Yes." I guess to some people, all Orientals *do* look alike.

In semantics, we try to look upon language not in the way that English teachers look upon it, but as a social science. One function of language which has fascinated me for some time is that of giving clues as to the identity and status of the speaker. These clues may be given unconsciously, as when someone, by his accent or pronunciation or vocabulary, reveals his aristocratic or lower class origins. They may be given quite consciously, as in the deliberate flaunting of a currently fashionable slang.

The physician, the psychoanalyst, the social scientist, the jazz musician, the actor, the clergyman, the ball player, the computer engineer, and the convict, is likely to develop a special language with which to identify himself in his talk with his fellows. People with common interests, talking to each other in their own in-group language, with special terms that reinforce their attitudes toward the world and toward themselves, enjoy a sense of solidarity that can be produced in hardly any other way. When we meet someone whose language we recognize as our own, we say, "I like him. He speaks my language."

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Language, then, is a badge of social identification, and we judge others at least as much by their badges as by the substance of what they say. You remember the point made by Bernard Shaw in *Pygmalion,* that when you take away the dialect differences between a duchess and an Cockney flower girl, there are very few differences left.

President Johnson, so far in this administration, has effectively fulfilled the dreams of most Northern liberal intellectuals, except in his Viet Nam policy. In civil rights, voting rights for Negroes, conservation, and the war on poverty, in the Job Corps and the Headstart Program, in his enlightened approach to the problems of urbanization, in the protection of the consumer, President Johnson has been the Northern liberal's dream man. Nevertheless, most liberal intellectuals I know are highly critical, if not openly contemptuous, of President Johnson, and refuse to give him credit even for his accomplishments of which they approve.

I keep wondering if their reactions are based upon a rejection of President Johnson's personal literary and speech style. Suppose Mr. Johnson had pursued the same policies, but with Adlai Stevenson's urbane wit and literary grace. Would our intellectual friends have lauded Mr. Johnson for his liberal policies while apologizing for his actions in Viet Nam? Or would they have supported his Viet Nam policy? Of course, these are idle speculations, but they occur because I am continually impressed by the degree to which the criticism of Mr. Johnson by my professorial colleagues is heavy with cultural condescension. They say, "How can you stand that corny Texas folksiness, that country preacher style?"

Guy Wright a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner,* comments on this disparagement of Mr. Johnson:

> The President, as you know, is a Texan, and intellectuals just don't like a Texas drawl. The American academic community is Eastern oriented. It is afflicted with a provincialism that prefers nonsense, so long as it's spoken with a Harvard accent, to the wisdom of Solomon with a Western twang. These are people who, when the chips are down, value style more than substance. They would have dismissed Abraham Lincoln as just too terribly uncouth. (Take President Kennedy's famous statement:) "Ask not what your country can do for you . . ." That same speech, if read in Mr. Johnson's Texas drawl would have been hooted down by the intelligentsia as pure corn.

In many social groups—among thieves, prostitutes, members of the underworld, as well as bureaucrats, high priests, lawyers, physicians, and other specialized intellectuals—a special dialect not only promotes communication and solidarity within the group, but also prevents outsiders from understanding what is being said and thereby keeps out-

siders in their status as outsiders. Indeed, one of the functions of language is the *prevention* of communication.

It is easy enough to see that the underworld would want a secret language that outsiders cannot understand, because it has secrets to keep from the respectable world. But the learned world also has secrets to keep. A learned vocabulary has two functions: first, it has the communicative function of expressing ideas, including difficult, important, and sometimes recondite ideas. But a learned vocabulary also has the social function of conferring prestige upon its users and creating awe among those who do not understand it. One of the real pleasures of being learned is to induce in the unlearned the reaction, "God, he must be smart. I can't understand a word he says!" We who are learned are always a little afraid that if we were to explain ourselves clearly enough for the common man to understand, he would cease to be impressed with us.

Historically, the intellectual's self-esteem has long rested upon the conviction that he is a special kind of individual, removed from the masses. Intellectuals have generally tried to maintain a monopoly on learning by communicating with each other in a language the masses couldn't understand—in the Far East, Sanskrit, and in the European world, Greek and Latin. These dead languages served the extremely useful function of keeping the peasants in a state of awe-struck reverence before mysteries they could not hope to understand.

Now, the trouble with being an American scholar is that, unlike our medieval counterparts, we cannot protect our exalted social image by writing in Latin. But we can, and do, write a language as opaque as Latin. Let me quote from a recent issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*:

> In any formal organization, the goals as reflected in the system of functional differentiation result in a distinctive pattern of role differentiation. In turn, role differentiation, whether viewed hierarchically or horizontally, leads to what Mannhein called "perspectivistic thinking,'" namely, incumbency in a particular status induces a corresponding set of perceptions, attitudes and values. In an organization, as in society as a whole, status occupants tend to develop a commitment to subunit goals and tasks—a commitment that may be dysfunctional from the viewpoint of the total organizational goals. In other words, "perspectivistic thinking" may interfere with the coordination of effort toward the accomplishment of total organizational goals, thus generating organizational pressures to insure adequate levels of performance

In this passage the author is merely saying (1) that in any formal organization, different people have different tasks; (2) that people sometimes get engrossed in their own special tasks to a degree that interferes with the goals of the organization as a whole; and therefore (3) that the

organization has to put pressures on them to get the over-all job done. What is clear from this passage (the *only* thing that is clear) is that the author's concern with his professional standing as a sociologist has almost completely submerged his concern with communicating his ideas.

It seems to me that this passage illustrates beautifully the dilemma of the young, ambitious scholar. As a scholar, he must share his findings with others. He must communicate. As a communicator, he knows from every-day experience that the simpler and more unpretentious his prose, the more effective his communication. But in addition to being a scholar, the young man, like the rest of us, is a status seeker. He wants to be respected by others as a man of learning.

An academic tradition that goes back at least to the Shang Dynasty in China and the scribes of ancient Egypt tells the young scholar that you cannot be respected as a man of learning if everyone can understand what you say. So what does he do? He makes an uneasy compromise. He publishes papers in order to communicate and thereby become a part of the academic community; but he also uses a language that is guaranteed by its abstractness, its prolixity, and its sheer lifelessness to discourage attention and to obscure comprehension. I think that we can state as a general rule that *Whenever the social functions of a learned vocabulary become more important to its users than its communicative function, communication suffers and jargon proliferates.*

Now, it seems to me that we as teachers of English are among the few people left to fight against this proliferation of jargon. Of course, there are people in business and public relations and advertising who are really interested in clarity of communication. Usually, though, they are interested for commercial reasons. They must get their ideas across clearly in order to persuade. But for us, clarity of communication is not only a matter of prose style, it is a matter of clarity of thinking.. I think these two cannot be separated.

I found recently a fascinating book published by the United States Superintendent of Documents and written by John O'Hayre, an employee of the Department of Interior in the Denver office of the Bureau of Land Management. In his book, *Gobbledygook Has Got To Go,* Mr. O'Hayre cites an example of bureaucratic prose within his own department:

> To: State Director
>
> From: John Lawbook, Solicitor
>
> Subject: Roland Occupancy Trespass
>
> This responds to your memorandum dated February 21, 1964, requesting that we review and comment concerning the subject Roland trespass on certain lands under reclamation withdrawal.
>
> We appreciate your apprising us of this matter and we certainly concur that appropriate action is in order to protect the interests of the United States.

> We readily recognize the difficult problem presented by this situation, and if it can be otherwise satisfactorily resolved, we would prefer to avoid trespass action. If you determine it permissible to legalize the Roland occupancy and hay production by issuance of a special use permit, as suggested in your memorandum, we have no objection to that procedure.
>
> Any such permit should be subject to cancellation when the lands are actively required for reclamation purposes and should provide for the right of the officers, agents, and employees of the United States at all times to have unrestricted access and ingress to, passage over, and egress from all said lands, to make investigations of all kinds, dig test pits and drill test holes, to survey for reclamation and irrigation works, and to perform any and all necessary soil and moisture conservation work.
>
> If we can be of any further assistance in this matter, please advise. We would appreciate being informed of the disposition of this problem.

After three or four pages of squeezing the fat out of this, O'Hayre came up with the following revision:

> Got your memo on the Roland trespass case. You're right; action is needed. The problem is tough, and we'd like to avoid trespass action if we can. So, if you can settle this case by issuing Roland a special-use permit, go ahead. Please spell out the Government's cancellation rights and right-to-use provisions in the permit.
> If we can be of further help, please call. Keep us informed.

In this last version there are 70 words, and in the original version there are about 400. Now, the question I would like to submit to you is: is this difference merely a matter of prose style? I maintain—and this is a part of my point of view as a semanticist—that is much more than a question of style. It is a question of clarity of mind. How can you prevent yourself from developing mental smog, if you write the kind of bureaucratic prose of which I gave you an example earlier?

The problem of teachers of composition in elementary and high schools, as well as in colleges, is that many of the so-called culturally deprived are not so much culturally deprived as they are speakers of a non-standard dialect of English. The basic problem, as I said earlier, is, what are we trying to do with language? Are we trying to establish our social position, or are we trying to communicate something? I owe you money, and you're trying to collect. It doesn't matter whether I say "I ain't got no money," "I'm broke," or "My assets are not in liquid condition." Operationally speaking, you're not going to collect. The linguistic form, or the dialect form, of an utterance is not as important as its semantic conen.

Suppose a student comes to you and says, "The tomatoes ain't doin' so good this year." Traditionally, as teachers of English, we are trained to jump on that word "ain't." But, aren't there more important questions with which to confront the student? What is the semantic content of your statement? What tomatoes are you talking about? Tomatoes on your father's farm? Tomatoes in your county? Tomatoes in your state? The national tomato crop? And how do you know? Have you been talking to your relatives? Have you talked to your county agricultural agent? Did you read the report in *The Wall Street Journal*?

After you have clarified *what* tomatoes are being referred to and *where* the information came from, you might put the statement into upper-class English. But that's the last problem, isn't it? The most important problems are, "What are you talking about? How do you know your statement is true?" But these are usually the last questions we as English teachers ask. Since we only ask those silly questions about grammatical form, students often get the idea that we have nothing important to teach; that we are concerned only with alternative linguistic forms.

What are we doing? Are we teaching communication, or are we teaching linguistic cosmetology?

Before leaving this question, I would like you to recall that the distance between upper-class speech and lower-class Negro speech in America is no greater than the difference between upper-class London speech and the dialect of Robert Burns' most famous poems. If Robert Burns could make himself an immortal poet with that awful Scottish low-country dialect of his, there is no reason that anybody cannot learn to communicate beautifully, if he learns how to use the resources of his dialect with imagination and linguistic sensitivity. Obviously the lower-class Negro dialect or the Mexican-American dialect in Los Angeles won't do for the intellectual processes involved in getting to be president of General Electric or General Motors, but nevertheless these are not the only goals our students are concerned with. Most important of all is to cultivate in our students linguistic sensitivity, quickness to hear and learn any dialect that it is necessary to learn, including upper-class dialect, and constant alertness and curiosity about language. I think that this is about the most we can do for them.

Last summer, finding myself in imminent danger of becoming obsolete because of my unfamiliarity with modern techniques of data processing, I took a one-week course in Los Angeles at IBM in computer concepts in management. I still don't know quite what I learned—perhaps it's too early to tell, but there was one semantic idea that came through to me in the course of that week. I was enormously impressed by the semantic demands the computer makes—that in order to get a meaningful answer, you must ask a meaningful question.

In his discussion of psychological maladjustments, Wendell Johnson said, "Human energy is never so extravagantly wasted than in the persistent effort to answer conclusively questions that are vague and meaningless. Probably the most impressive indictment that can be made of our

educational system is that it provides the student with answers, but is poorly designed to provide him with skill in the asking of questions that can effectively direct inquiry and evaluation." I wonder if the demands made by computer programming and by the general semantics of Wendell Johnson—the disciplines of logic, clarity, coherency, of knowing what you are talking about—will one day help to clarify the language of literary studies or the language of existential philosophy?

We are teachers in a democratic society. In non-democratic societies, the learned maintained erudition as a privilege, a perogative, a caste mark. But most of us here are in tax-supported schools, based upon the democratic premises that learning is not a monopoly of a certain caste but is open for everyone who is willing to learn. Insofar as we help to perpetuate this kind of, shall I say, "semantic hash," such as Heidegger writes in the name of philosophy, we continue to create a barrier between ourselves and our students.

In India, the British used to have a derogatory term for the pretentious and often comically inappropriate English used by poorly trained Indian civil servants and clerks. They called it "Babu English." Let us remove this term, "Babu English" or "Babuism," from its original application and use it as a general term to mean discourse in which the speaker or writer throws around learned words he does not understand in order to create a favorable impression. Babuism has existed and probably will continue to exist in any culture where there is a learned class of magicians, shamans, priests, professors, teachers, and other professional verbalizers with large vocabularies. Babuism results whenever people who are not learned try to confer upon themselves the social advantages of appearing to be learned.

As has often been pointed out in the study of semantics, there is a common tendency among people to confuse symbols with the things they stand for. Our students may do the same thing. The student may confuse the symbols of learning, namely, an abstract and difficult vocabulary, with learning itself. Not being able to understand the assignments he is reading and blaming himself for his failure to understand, he may conscientiously apply himself again and again to them until he is familiar with the vocabulary of the course—a vocabulary that can hardly help being Babu English, because he doesn't know what it is all about. If he is clever, he will be able to parrot enough of this vocabulary in his final term paper to make it sound very plausible. The teacher who reads the paper will also not be quite sure what it is all about, but he will recognize the vocabulary as his own and therefore give it a passing grade. The student in college eventually learns to speak and write several kinds of babu—literary babu, psychological babu, educational babu, philosophical babu, the babu of art criticisms, and so on, until he eventually gets his bachelor's degree. Perhaps he'll go on to graduate school and get his Ph.D., in which case he will have a vested interest in the perpetuation of babu. Thus academic jargon, like a huge stream swollen with high order abstractions, keeps rolling along, like Ol' Man River.

Suppose you are saying goodbye to a friend who has dropped in, and

he says as he leaves, "We must get together for lunch some time." And you say, "Yes, we must get together." Now, there are certain ways that are not lexically definable by which we know whether he really means we should have lunch soon, or whether he doesn't. Sometimes he means "Really, it is so nice to be with you; we must have lunch." And sometimes he means "Goodbye, I don't care if I ever see you again." The words are the same, the music is different. Let's use the term "message" to mean the words "Let's have lunch," and let's use the term "metamessage" to mean the message about the message, which says "I mean it," or "I don't really mean it."

In all interpersonal communication, as opposed to scientific communication, we are very sensitive to metamessages. As a matter of fact, when we were babies we learned about metamessages long before we could understand the messages. We learned from mother's tone of voice about her concern, about her anger, and about her love—and it all came by metamessage.

Sometimes the metamessage is consistent with the message. In this case, you have what I call congruence of message and metamessage. When there is congruence between the two, we tend to trust the speaker and say, "I may disagree with him, but I know he means what he says. He's sincere." Recognition of this sincerity is the tribute we pay to those who we feel have congruent messages and metamessages.

Men, by the way, sometimes go in for a kind of conscious meta-incongruence. In our culture, it is difficult for men to say to each other, "I love you; you are my dear friend." Men just don't say "I love you" to each other. What they say is, "How are you, you old bastard?" But they say it with a smile, which says, "I love you." Here you have a deliberate meta-incongruence, the nasty name canceled out by the metamessage. This is the only way men have in our culture to state their affection for one another; therefore the more friendly they are, the more dreadful their language becomes.

In the case of unconscious meta-incongruence, you have a real problem—a problem that usually requires professional attention. For instance, when people say things like, "I hate him," "I love him," "I was never so angry in my life," with no tone, no accompanying metamessage conveying hate, or love, or anger—then you know that there is something wrong. This unconscious incongruity is wonderfully illustrated in the famous example of the woman who consulted her psychiatrist about her relationship with her daughter, saying to him, "I tell that child a dozen times a day that I love her, but still the brat hates me!"

People in clinical psychology have been coming to the conclusion that when, as a result of their ministrations, their clients are able to state their problems clearly, they are able to handle them more effectively. This is what psychologists and psychiatrists try to help a patient to do—state his problems clearly. This is not very difficult from what we as English or speech teachers try to get our students to do: to state clearly whatever is on their minds. Unless a question or problem is clearly stated, solutions, advances in the intellectual process, cannot take place.

The big job in psychotherapy, then, is in clarification—helping the client find out what is *really* worrying him, helping him to discover what he *really* fears, what the sources of his anxieties are, and so on. Now, writing is obviously a form of communication, and so is speech. When we instruct our students in debate, or when we instruct them in composition, are we not encouraging them to state their thoughts accurately? But since we are in a literary occupation, rather than in mental health, we want to encourage the speaker or writer to communicate not only the thought itself, but the adventure of having that thought. That is, there is more to real communications that the transmission of semantic content. The student must also get the feelings that go with the thought in order to understand them.

In scientific writing we rarely give of ourselves. In fact, technical prose involves controlling our judgments, our passions, our abhorrences, our enthusiams, so that data may be presented in a de-personalized way. Scientific or technical writing is deliberately without warmth or rhythm. It conveys not thought so much as the bones of thought.

Dr. Robert A. Fairthorne, who is an information specialist, quotes one of his teachers as saying, "I can give you information, but only God can give you understanding." I think he's wrong in that the function of speech—eloquent speech—and the function of writing—good writing—is not only to give informtion, but to give understanding. The skillful writer, in a literary sense, is he who not only gets his information organized and reasonably explained, but who also endows his sentences and paragraphs with those metamessages that make that information come to life in the reader's mind.

The skillful writer, therefore, uses words not only for their sound, but also for their sense. He uses words for their connotative and suggestive value, as well as for their denotative value. He uses words for their rhythm, as well as for their reasoning power. Scientific and technical writers usually do not create understanding in the deeper sense, in the sense of an adventure of the mind. However, the aim of the literary writer and speaker is to create understanding, rather than just to convey information. The reader, to understand truly the writer's thought, must go through the adventure of thinking this thought; he must share the image in the writer's mind; he must share the passion of his conviction; he must share the rhythms of his intellectual progression.

I've used the word "rhythm" here for a very important reason. Sir Herbert Read, the great art critic, has written about rhythm: "Rhythm .. . . is born not with the words, but with the thought, and with whatever confluence of instincts and emotions the thought is accompanied. As the thought takes shape in the mind, it takes *a* shape. It has always been recognized that clear thinking preceeds clear writing. There is about our good writing a visual quality. It actually reproduces what we shall metaphorically call the contour of our thought. The metaphor is for once exact: thought has a contour or shape. The paragraph is the perception of this contour or shape." (*English Prose Style* [1928], p. 65.)

It is fruitful, therefore, to study in addition to the "movement" in

prose given by tuneful cadences, alliteration, and other devices of sound, the "movement" of ideas. It will be readily seen that syntactical pattern, the logical structure of all units, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, present, roughly, the "shape" of the thought—the "course" that the mind has "described." A well-constructed composition, of whatever length, does give this sense of the mind having made an *orderly* progress. These "movements" of the mind may be large or small, but they are always connected, so that if a badly connected passage is intruded into the midst of a work, the mind is, as we say, "thrown off," and we "grope about" for a moment trying to connect things, and if no connection appears, we proceed with irritation, if we proceed at all. The connections in the progression of ideas are mainly the product of logical thinking.

The literary use of language is often not understood in technical writing. I am grateful to John H. Wilson for a paper in which he makes a distinction between what he calls "transformable" and "non-transformable" information. Transformable information is the information of science. It is often stated in numerical terms; it can be computerized; it can be coded in a number of languages; it can be put into a machine and it will come out the other end; it can be on tape or punched on a card or translated into flashes of light. Transformable information can be translated back and forth, and you still have the same information. Information such as your name, address, social security number is transformable.

But some information is non-transformable. If Toulous Lautrec, Van Gogh, Turner, and Sir Joshua Reynolds all painted a picture of, let us say, dandelions, they would all paint different pictures. Dandelions are a different experience for all of them, because they are artists. The fact of the dandelion as a botanical specimen, then, is transformable information. But how this dandelion is understood—how Lautrec sees it, how Turner sees it— is non-transformable information.

John Wilson says that works of art are beyond the scope of transformable information, and by works of art he means not only paintings but literary productions. He writes, "Take, for example, Arnold Toynbee's ten-volume *A Study of History*. I have read only the first six volumes, and I have paged through Somerwell's abridgment of those volumes, which aptly summarizes Toynbee's ideas, but fails to re-create the Toynbeean universe; and it is that unique creation that is Toynbee's contribution—not his ideas, or what others think or believe his ideas to be."

When scientists discuss the possible meaning and implications of their data, their ideas often cannot be paraphrased; their sentences cannot be transformed for computer processes. In other words, some of the most important information in the world, information about how we feel, how we react, how we respond to the world, is not transformable information that can be put into a computer. Much of it remains information that is non-transformable, information which must be *experienced* by the scientist, the poet, the novelist, the scholar. Thus, despite the rapid progress of technology, I feel that we as teachers of speech and English continue to have a function in the world. As teachers of speech and English, we

are teachers of eloquence and style. We are teaching our students how to preserve and perpetuate the non-transformable experiences of the world.

As teachers of English and speech, we are often accused of dealing with our students as if they were all going to be English majors. But some of them are going to be scientists and some of them are going to be poets and advertising men and some of them are going to be business men. To some of them we must teach clear scientific language and to some of them we must teach eloquence. We have a responsibility to the entire intellectual community—and not just to the literary people—and therefore we must be interested in thought—in scientific thought as well as in literary, humanistic, or poetic thought. In fact, that is one of our biggest responsibilities.

Semanticists are often asked, "Do you think that all problems are merely verbal?" I am asked this question all the time, and I never know how to answer it. But Claude Coleman of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, has answered it in verse:

"KEEP TALKING"

All problems are not merely verbal,
The philosophers tell me in uncounted thousands of words—but
I tried making love with my mouth taped shut
And I lost my love.

I tried making friends with my mouth taped shut
And I lost my friend.

I tried making war with my mouth taped shut
But no one was angry and the shooting stopped.
I went about the street with my mouth taped shut
And they took me to the nuthouse.

Where I am to this day
Wondering
If all problems are not merely verbal.

Let me close by quoting some poems. The first one, which I wrote myself is so frivolous I have called it

SOLEMN THOUGHTS ON THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

In each insurance company, in every bank and store,
Are filing clerks and billing clerks and typists by the score;
The work that all these people do will one day disappear
In ERMA[1] systems tended by a lonely engineer.
(But they'll never mechanize me—not me!
Said Charlotte, the Louisville harlot.)

While former auto workers try to fill their empty days,
The automated auto-plant will turn out Chevrolets;

With automatic pilots landing jet plans on the strip,
The present men who guide them will not need to take the trip.
(But how can they automate me? Goodness me!
Asked Millie, the call girl from Philly.)

Who'll keep the inventory up, who'll order the supplies
Of paper towels, linens, iron pipe, or railroad ties?
Executives now do this with a steno and a phone,
But big computers soon will make decisions all alone.
(They cannot cybernate me, tee hee!
Laughed Alice, the hooker from Dallas.)

Machines will teach our children how to read and add and spell;
Because they've lots of patience, they will do it very well.
If business men and managers are not on the alert,
Their functions will be taken on by CPM[2] and PERT.[3]
(I'll never be coded in FORTRAN[4]—wheee!
Cried Susie, the Hackensack floozie.)

Chorus of Charlotte, Millie, Alice, and Susie:
The future will be like the past despite all dire foreseeings;
We stoutly shall defend the human use of human beings.

Let me close by quoting a poem by James Elroy Flecker which perhaps represents the literary ideal that most of us have:

TO A POET A THOUSAND YEARS HENCE

I who am dead a thousand years,
And wrote this sweet archaic song,
Send you my words for messengers
The way I shall not pass along.

I care not if you bridge the seas,
Or ride secure the cruel sky,
Or build consummate palaces
Of metal or of masonry.

But have you wine and music still,
And statues and a bright-eyed love,
And foolish thoughts of good and ill,
And prayers to them who sit above?

How shall we conquer? Like a wind
That falls at eve our fancies blow,
And old Maeonides the blind
Said it three thousand years ago.

(Collected Poems
James Elroy Flecker)

1Electronic Recording and Machine Accounting. 2Critical Path Method.
3Program Evaluation and Review Technique. 4Formula Translation.